

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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Memorandum

TO : Mr. Paul Henze
National Security Council Staff
LIA

DATE: 21 November 1979

FROM : Chief, Covert Action Staff,

SUBJECT: Soviet, Iranian & Pakistani Comments on Mecca, Islamabad Situations

1. The Soviets appear to be hunkering down somewhat over the Iranian crisis and trying to put some distance between themselves and the Iranians.

-- 20 November National Voice of Iran commentary welcomed the release of some of the American hostages and said a way should be found to release the rest.

-- Same day commentary by influential, Kremlin-connected Izvestia observer, Bovin, took a swipe at Khomeini over treatment of the Kurds (paralleled in NVOI commentaries).

-- Moscow Radio Domestic Service report on 21 November said that some of those involved in the Mecca action are people of "Iranian descent."

2. Last item stands in contrast to Khomeini's attempt to link the U.S. and Israel to the Mecca situation. Khomeini's office issued a statement today at 1030 GMT which said that "it is not farfetched" to believe U.S. imperialism and Zionism were behind the seizure of the mosque. (Note: Mobs moved against the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan at 0830 GMT)

3. FBIS analyst reports that Bangkok bureau knows of no Karachi broadcast which claimed that the U.S. is behind the Mecca disturbance, although such a statement may not have been monitored by the bureau.

4. At 1515 GMT today President Zia made a statement denying that either non-Muslims or any particular Western nation was responsible for the Mecca situation. A statement by Karachi radio at 1700 GMT warned the rioters that further acts of violence would be dealt with harshly.

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